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**ROMNEY ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES NEW, UNIFIED PARKS SYSTEM**  
*Environmental Secretary Herzfelder announces transition team to guide changes*

Environmental Affairs Secretary Ellen Roy Herzfelder today announced a transition team that will facilitate the unification of the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) and the Department of Environmental Management (DEM), the state's two parks and recreation agencies. Governor Mitt Romney signed legislation on June 30 enabling the MDC and the DEM to become one organization, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

"This is a great day for everyone who uses our state's parks, beaches, pools and rinks," said Secretary Herzfelder. "The Department of Conservation and Recreation will turn our recreational system into a national model and will combine the best of what MDC and DEM have to offer. In the coming weeks, the experienced members of our transition team will plot a course to success for this important new department."

The DCR transition team is comprised of top managers from within DEM, MDC and EOEA. Its members include: Peter Webber, Susan Frechette, Todd Frederick, Bill McKinney, Bernadette O'Malley, Samantha Overton-Bussell, Joe McGinn, Julius Babbitt, Stephen Pritchard and Betsy ShureGross. One of the team's first priorities will be to hire a new commissioner.

"We need a great leader with a strong vision to direct this new organization," said Secretary Herzfelder. "While the best person may be right here in our backyard, we are exploring all of our options."

Secretary Herzfelder noted the importance of partnerships in building the new organization. Representatives from parks groups such as the Esplanade Association and the Island Alliance were present to show their support for the new department.

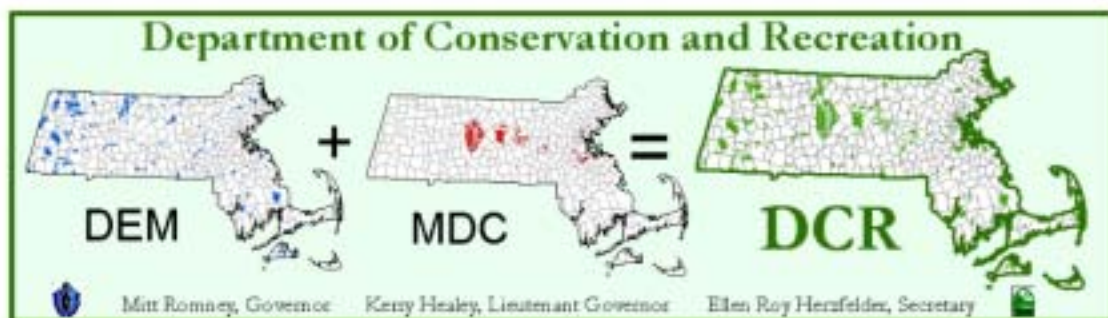
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“Together we can achieve a level of public land management not seen in decades. In collaborative and innovative ways, we will continue Massachusetts’ leadership role established by Olmsted and Eliot over a century ago and managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation today,” said Kathy Abbott, Executive Director of the Island Alliance.

“The transformation of our parks agencies won’t happen overnight, but it will happen,” said Secretary Herzfelder. “Park users won’t notice many immediate changes this summer but they will notice improvements in the future. All of our summer facilities are now open and I urge everyone to enjoy them.”

The Department of Conservation and Recreation will manage and oversee approximately 460,000 acres of state lands, including conservation areas such as watersheds and forests, and recreation areas such as rinks, pools, beaches and parks.



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## **Department of Conservation and Recreation Summer Safety Tips:**

### ***General safety tips:***

- Always check in at the ranger station before hiking in parks and reservations.
- Bring plenty of water.
- Know your limitations.
- Wear sunscreen and insect repellent.
- If possible, bring a cell phone with you.

### ***When swimming:***

- Know the depth of the water you are in.
- Never swim alone.
- Always swim near a lifeguard.
- Never dive into unknown areas.
- Be cautious of riptides, undertows and currents.
- Be watchful of young children at pools and beaches.
- Always protect yourself from the sun.
- Observe water quality postings.
- Never swim while drinking alcohol.

### ***When hiking:***

- Know your surroundings – locate the entrance and exit to trails.
- Protect yourself from the ultraviolet rays of the sun.
- Observe all of the safety signs at the facility.

### ***When camping:***

- Use cooking grills only in designated areas.
- Take special care with ashes and extinguished matches, cigarettes and cigars.
- Make sure campfires are fully extinguished.
- Keep your valuables with you.

### ***When boating:***

- Wear a life jacket.
- Make sure your boat is safe to operate.
- Do not drink alcohol before or while operating any watercraft.
- Take a boating education course.

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